

JERUSALEM.

SOME NOTES OF A RECENT JOURNEY.

How to Get There.

Every Christian and every philosophic student of history must desire to see Jerusalem. It was formerly very difficult and even dangerous to go there. But now it is safe, easy, and comparatively inexpensive for the traveler to choose from. He may start from Egypt and follow the route through the desert of Sinai; or he may land at Beirut, in Central Syria, pass the hills of Lebanon, and proceed southward through the country of Galilee; but each of these involves a long journey on horseback, with a caravan of camels and pack animals. The simplest and shortest way is through Jaffa, or Joppa as it was called in St. Paul's time. This is the seaport in the Eastern Mediterranean that is nearest to Jerusalem; and a railway finished three months ago bears the traveler directly to his destination. From Constantinople a steamer for Jaffa is started every week, and so they are from Alexandria and Port Said, the nearest Egyptian ports. But landing at Jaffa is uncertain. It is an open roadstead, not a sheltered harbor; and between the anchoring ground of ships and the beach, stretches a long and sharp-edged reef, just rising to the surface of the water; and on a windy day the breakers falling upon it are shattered into foam. In this reef there is a narrow passage, wide enough for a whale-boat; and once through there is safety. But the slightest variation from the true line hurls your boat upon the rocks and drowns its passengers. Just before we were there in November a boat's crew had been destroyed, and usually if a westerly wind is blowing, steamers will not attempt to land, but carry away the pilgrims to a more distant port and an uncertain destination. But with the increased traffic of Jaffa, it cannot, we suppose, be very long before a safe harbor is built there, and the debarkation of voyagers made safe and comfortable.

After you are well ashore at Jaffa, you have two good ways of reaching Jerusalem. First

As we gaze around, nothing that we see produces the effect either of antiquity or of sacredness. The station buildings are new, and we see new buildings, both finished and under construction, with various evidences of modern activity and progress, upon almost every height that rises in the range of vision. All is noise, bustle, and confusion; and, unless the traveler has the good fortune to be under the protection of Mr. Cook—and we here record our conviction that the name of the East is the establishment which bears the name of Thomas Cook & Son is an unmitigated blessing—he may even be stirred with fear for his personal safety in the disputes of cab drivers and hotel agents for the possession of his person and luggage.

The terminus is about a mile from the principal western gate, known as the Jaffa gate, which leads through the walls into the ancient city. I have seen it alleged in some newspaper that the terminus is in the valley of Hinnom, but it is a mistake. The valley of Hinnom bounds the western and southern lines of the city wall; but between it and the place where the terminus stands there is no doubt; and as we cross it in driving toward the town, we look down into that part of the valley where of old the pious King Josiah "defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch;" and where long afterward, as Jeremiah records, the heaven-defying chil-

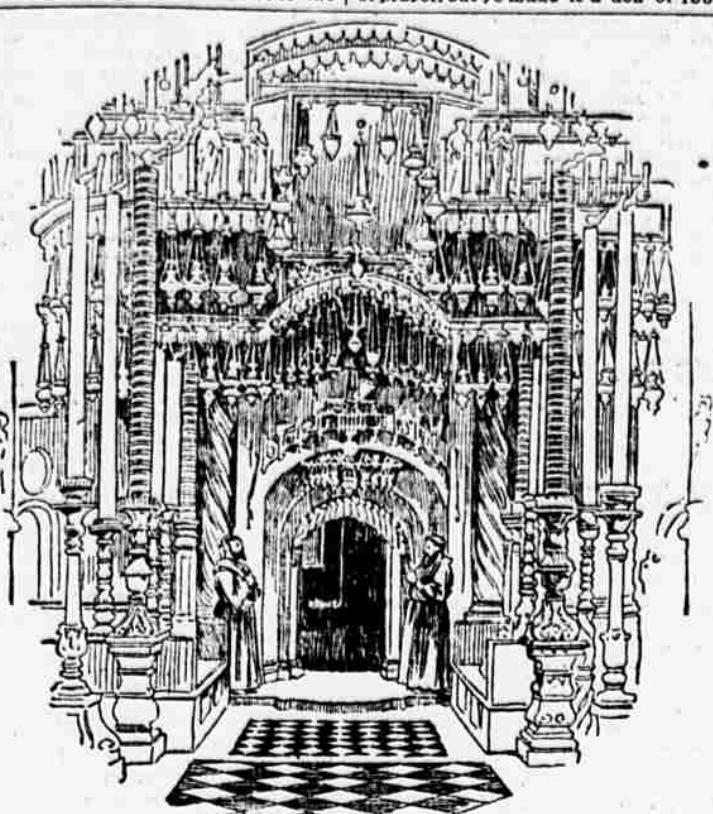
tion or denial. The place of the crucifixion and burial of Christ, as the great body of Christians have believed for fifteen hundred years, is marked by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; but, apart from the Roman Catholics, the orthodox Greeks, and the Armenians, the majority of Christians would seem to have fixed their faith upon a quite different quarter outside of the present city wall. It is true that few scholars express themselves upon this subject with the vehemence employed by the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant. He avers that "it has now been proved to a demonstration that, wherever the tomb in which Christ was laid after his crucifixion may have been, it could not have been in the cave over which the gorgeous edifice called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands." The same writer declares that "the Jerusalem of the present day, the holy city of the world par excellence, contains within its walls more sacred shrines and impostures than any other city in the world." It is evident that much study in this direction cannot lead to that reverent and prayerful spirit in which any rational Christian education must naturally approach the place where he believes the Redeemer of the world was laid after his execution; and we turn with pleasure from such skepticism to the opposing utterance of such an authority as Mr. William G. Prime. He is a Protestant, understands the question thoroughly, and is familiar with the views of all the scholars who have written upon the

Greeks is by far the most ornate and magnificent. To its own chapel each one of these parties has, of course, an exclusive right; but the use of the central church for religious services is allotted to each in its order, and for a certain time of the day; and a guard of Turkish soldiers is constantly present within the outer door of the church to enforce this order and to keep the different kinds of Christians from disturbing the public peace by contentions for unregulated possession of the church.

The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre is a small structure of polished stone in the rotunda of the church, under the high vault of its roof. Fifteen lamps are kept burning in this chapel: five belonging to the Greeks, five to the Catholics, four to the Armenians, and one to the

reject it would be to change Jerusalem from a home and centre of unquestioning faith into a theatre of dispute and uncertainty.

Turning from the Via Dolorosa and entering into a street broad enough for a carriage, which leads across the city toward the south, we come to a high-railed passage two or three hundred feet long, with shops on each side of it, through which we proceed to the stairs that ascend to the ancient platform of the Temple. It was out of this entrance, as the tradition tells us, that "He cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves; and he saith unto them, 'It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye make it a den of robbers.'"



THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPEL.

Copts. The sarcophagus in which the Lord is believed to have rested, is fitted with a cover of polished stone, porphyry, we think, and its covering is believed by most visitors to be the sepulchre itself. It is constantly worn away by the kisses of the faithful, and has to be replaced every few years from that time to this.

But, whatever the attitude of the mind toward these questions, it is impossible without deep emotion to observe the throngs of pilgrims from east or west that daily visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We were there

A few steps and we mount to the open place where the Temple formerly stood. It is perhaps ten feet higher than the level of the city on the west; and on the east a substantial wall separates it from the Valley of Kedron, beyond which we behold the trees of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives. On the south a much more massive wall, which completes the quadrangle toward the Valley of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom, is undoubtedly a remnant of the foundations which sustained the Temple of Herod; and a considerable portion of it may even date from the Temple of Solomon.

As we have already said, the principal structure which stands upon this historic plateau, is the Mosque of Omar, named after the first Muslim conqueror of Jerusalem, although it is far from certain that he was concerned in building it. But, at any rate, it is one of the most sacred places known to the Mohammedan religion. It is only second in sanctity to the

that they could easily be read from some distance below, setting forth verses from the Koran adoring and praising the Most High. This frieze was not yet finished as much as half way around the octagon, when we inspected it in November; and it looked as if it formed a part of the original design, which they just now had the means to execute. When it is done, it will add very greatly to the dignity and solemnity of the mosque.

The interior of this famous house of worship bore to the full that appearance of high priestly sanctity which we had noticed in the Jerusalem. The mosaics which beautify the roof, seemed almost as brilliant as those of St. Mark's itself, though far less elaborate. The cleanliness of the house was perfect, and every inch of the floor was carpeted with rugs of exquisite taste and richness. When the priests came forward to welcome us within the doors, we could tell them without exaggeration that we did not know even in Christendom, another temple of religion more faultless in itself, more worthily cared for, or more beautifully maintained.

In the centre of the mosque stands the Holy Rock, the one thing in Jerusalem about whose antiquity and identity controversy seems almost impossible. The traditions attached to it are innumerable. Abraham and Melchizedek sacrificed burnt offerings upon it; it was here that Abraham was prevented by the angel from killing his son Isaac; here David established the ark of the covenant; here above the rock was raised the altar of burnt offerings in the Temple of Solomon; here, according to the Muslim tradition, was written the unspoken name of God, which Jesus alone was able to read; hence Mohammed ascended to heaven; at the Last Day the Kaaba from Mecca will be brought here, and then the final trial will come, and the dead will be brought to judgment. The rock is of irregular natural form. It is more than fifty feet long and forty feet wide, and channels are shown in it through which the blood of the sacrifices is said to have flowed away. How David became possessor of the place is recorded in the Second Book of Samuel:

"And God came back that day to David and said: 'Go up and rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite.' And David, according to the saying of God, went up as the Lord commanded. And Araunah looked and saw the King and his servants coming toward him; and Araunah said: 'Wherefore is my Lord, the King, come to his servant?' And David said: 'To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.' And Araunah said unto David: 'Let my Lord and his servants be heard; I will give what seemeth good unto him.' He held his oxen for the burnt offering, and the threshing instruments and the furniture of the oxen for the wood; and all these, O King, did Araunah give unto the King." And Araunah said unto the King: "The Lord thy God, accept thee! And the King said unto Araunah: 'Nay, but I will verify by it the fact at a price. Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God which cost me nothing.' So David bought the threshing plough and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

Bethlehem and Bethany.

Bethlehem, revered of all Christians as the birthplace of the Saviour, lies six miles west of the citadel of Jerusalem; and Bethany, where He loved to withdraw from the crowd, and find rest in the society of near friends and disciples, lies about six miles to the east. The most hallowed spot in the Holy City must include a visit to each of these places.

The road to Bethlehem is smooth and pleas-

ant, and objects of extraordinary association approach the mind at every turn. Toward Bethlehem, as we behold the sunny fields which formed the scene of the lovely story of Ruth and Boaz, the most charming story of Hebrew literature. In the same direction is the Cave of Adullam, where David, fighting man and Captain, but not yet King, had a refuge while the Philistines held his native town; and we know that toward the northwest, though invisible to us as yet, lies the valley where tradition tells us the very field in which the shepherds were "keeping watch by night over their flock." And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and

the Dead Sea which it reveals, and beyond all the mountains of Moab, with the peak of Nebo, whence Moses beheld the Promised Land which he might never enter. And then, mounting our donkeys again, we go down the western slope. There Jerusalem is before us, and the mountains of Ephraim that close in the angorous city upon the west, while at the foot is the garden of Gethsemane with its bowed and venerable cypresses whose age is counted by thousands of years, and there is the gentle and engaging old Italian monk who tends its flower beds and binds up packages of seeds for strangers to carry away. And as he receives the alms that is reached toward him, "It is for the poor?" he says: "It is not given in payment?"

In all the world there is no other spot that so affects the thoughts of the visitor, nor any human narrative that can touch the heart with such infinite pathos as this of the Evangelist: "And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane; and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here while I pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled. And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; abide ye here and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me; howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch with me one hour? And pray that thou enter not into temptation; the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak."

While Bethlehem more than met our expectations, Bethany rather proved a disappointment. It is an insignificant and decaying little hamlet, lying on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, and its few hundred people are Mohammedans. To go there, the most convenient method is to drive from Jerusalem. After you reach the points known as the grave of Lazarus and the house of Mary and Martha, you leave the carriage, and make the rest of the journey over the Mount of Olives on donkeys. At the western foot of the Mount you visit the garden of Gethsemane; and then you take your carriage again to return to the city.

While we know that Bethany was a favorite place of retirement with Jesus, there is no evidence to convince us that one or the other of the two places pointed out by popular tradition, and by the guides who conduct strangers, was habitually resorted to by Him; and no religious communion has adopted either of them as sacred and authentic. Yet as a whole Bethany is indissolubly connected with many of the most intimate and impressive occurrences of the Gospel history; and as we pass slowly up its winding and neglected alleys upon our donkeys, with the height of the Mount before us, and the olden autumn sky of Syria above, the mind is irresistibly carried back through the nineteenth centuries; and the persons and events of the ancient days seem to the fancy, and almost to the eye, to be there again all real and living.

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THE SHEPHERD'S FIELD, SEEN FROM BETHLEHEM.

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THE JAFFA GATE AT JERUSALEM.

From Col. Wilson's "Pictorial Palestine"

dren of Judah "built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch."

As we leave this ill-famed ravine and turn to the east, the lofty wall of Jerusalem and the massive towers of the citadel are immediately before us. We are on the outer slope of Mount Zion, the sanctuary and the abode of David! The ponderous blocks which form the lower strata of the wall, might have been shipped and landed in place by the Phoenician race of giants. More than almost anything else to be found around Jerusalem, or within, this wall bears an appearance of great antiquity. We can easily believe that its foundations were laid in the time of David, though its upper portions are unquestionably modern. The books vary. One says it was the work of Sultan Suleiman in the sixteenth century; another that it was erected much earlier; and my guide, a most intelligent and well-informed Jew of Hungarian origin, told me it was built by the Crusaders after they had got possession, for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants against the assaults of Arabs who would ride up in small parties, rob some rich family, and be off with their plunder before anything could be done to stop them. But, however this may be, the wall, from sixteen to twenty feet in height, fully encloses the town; and, although it could soon be knocked to pieces by a ten-pounder cannon, it stands in good order, solid enough for all peaceful purposes, and perfectly separates the city from the country about it.

While you are gazing at the old wall, your carriage moves along, and presently you find yourself stepping out at the door of your hotel, and it is on Mount Zion!

Beautiful in elevation, the top of this whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the side of the north, the city of the great King!

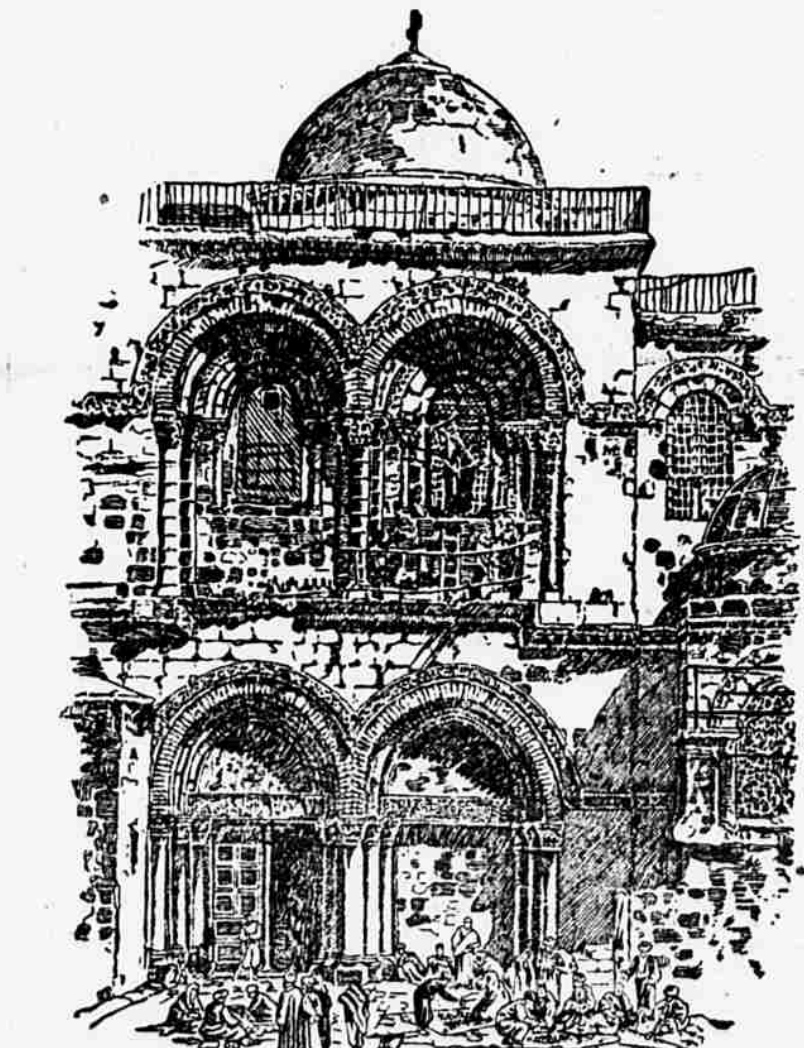
Walk about Zion, and go round about her; Tell the towers thereof, Mark well her bulwarks, Consider her palaces: That ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death!

The City itself.

As we get a complete view of Jerusalem and begin to understand it the first impression is surprise at the evident prosperity, due, as we presently understand, to the sum of money spent by the great and increasing mass of pilgrims who habitually resort there; and then we are even more surprised at the smallness of the place. It can never have been what would be called a large town; and Dr. W. M. Thomson, the author of "The Land and the Book," who examined the question very carefully some fifteen years ago, is convinced that in the time of its greatest glory it was never much larger than it is now. The actual present length of the wall which encloses the city, according to Dr. Thomson, is about two miles and a half, measuring the whole of the four sides; and the greatest length which he attributes to it in ancient times is a mile and a half from north to south, with an average breadth of half a mile from west to east, making the enclosed area something like 210 or 215 acres. Josephus also gives the total measurement of the walls before their destruction by Titus, at thirty-three furlongs, or a little over six miles. Roughly speaking, then, Jerusalem in its highest splendor was not larger than the area of the Central Park below the reservoir. Moreover, this limited space has always been diminished by the extent of the area levelled and walled, set apart of old for the Temple, and still held sacred by the Turkish authorities against the erection of ordinary buildings. The city contains, I should suppose, from thirty to thirty-five acres. It is the one conspicuous green spot in Jerusalem. It is covered with grass and adorned with trees; and the only buildings on it are the glorious and beautiful Mosque of Omar, the Mosque of Ake, and one or two other dependent structures.

The present population of Jerusalem is not far from 40,000, and more than half are Jews. They live in a separate quarter of their own, as do also the various divisions of Christians, as the Armenians, the Greeks, and the Protestants. All these quarters are densely built, with narrow and irregular lanes for streets, but the prevailing prosperity does not seem to reach the abodes of the Hebrews. The indications are all of extreme poverty. A synagogues was pointed out bearing an inscription showing that it was the gift of a Paris Rothschild; but its mean appearance and unattractive surroundings bore no suggestion of critical redness of face in the congregation. Little articles of food set out for sale in the petty little shops were of a wretched and repulsive quality. We came so often upon polluted salt fish among the stores exposed by the vendors, that we concluded it must form a regular element of diet in the quarter. There was no visible sign of industry by which the people might earn their living; and no one seemed surprised to learn that in various parts of the town the well-to-do and charitable Jews were regularly called upon to contribute to the support of their poorer brethren in Jerusalem.

We hate to say a word that may discourage any one's search after knowledge; but we must advise our readers who are preparing to see Jerusalem, not to read too many books of modern exploration and criticism for fear of losing all faith in the holy places where the remembrance of the founder of the Christian religion is most religiously preserved. This modern criticism, conducted in considerable part by men as pious as they are learned, has put into dispute almost every spot of importance in the history of the sacred city. Excepting the Temple, the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Sion, there is a single locality which remains free from ques-



ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

one morning when a company of Russians, several hundred in number, as we were told, came to make their devotions at the shrine. They were humble people, men, women, and youths; but the intensity and sincerity of their feeling, as they prostrated themselves to kiss the stone pavement in front of the sepulchre, no language could exaggerate. The canker of doubt and the infection of irreverence have never touched their honest and faithful souls. How much more enviable they appeared there in their devout prostration than the skeptics who condemn and the scoffer who jeers at their simple, unquestioning belief!

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was first built by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, in the first half of the fourth century. Two hundred years later it was burned by the Persians, but was soon built up again. In the tenth century it was

Near the chapel of the sepulchre, and within the enclosure of the church, the visitor is also permitted to examine the place where Christ was nailed to the cross, and the socket in the rock where the cross was erected. Close by is another chapel, the place where the vestments of Christ were divided; and another chapel is said to stand over the spot where the crown of thorns was put upon Him; and in another the impress of His feet is shown in the stone. The skeptic will not admit that these things are true, or that there is any sanctity in the places that inspire the believer with awe and wonder. But for the pious pilgrim, these subjects of religious meditation and holy ecstasy are offered in such relics and such traces of the Saviour's very footsteps! No wonder that the whole Christian world is drawn to Jerusalem by tens of thousands.

The criticism which denies the genuineness of all these remains and relics in and around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, rests upon the argument that this part of Jerusalem was included within the walls of the city at the time of the crucifixion, and that, accordingly, Christ could not have been put to death there, since it is certain that the place of execution was without the wall. The same argument would overthrow the belief, which has also prevailed for centuries, that it was through the street known as the Via Dolorosa that the Divine Victim was led from the tribunal of Pilate to the place of death. This street is perhaps half a mile long, and it is everywhere in close proximity to the present outer wall. Fourteen stations marked with tablets appear to show the path followed from the place of condemnation to the place of execution; and of these, seven or eight are in the Via Dolorosa. At one of them the cross was laid upon the shoulders of Jesus; another is at the spot where he is said to have fallen under that burden; at another he met his mother; at another Simon of Cyrene took the cross from him; at another he passed to speak to the women who accompanied the procession; and at another it is said that he fell again. The last five stations are in the church and the various chapels.

But, if it be true, as the so-called higher critics now maintain, that the crucifixion took place, not on the site now marked by the Holy Sepulchre, but on a hill at a short distance outside of the Damascus Gate, it must follow that the Via Dolorosa and its stations cannot have been the line of march which was followed on that tremendous day. We will not attempt to consider this controversy at any length, much less to express a decision respecting it. It is enough for our purpose to say that for fifteen hundred years the Christian Church has unanimously adhered to this belief; and that to



THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

twice badly damaged by fire, and in the beginning of the eleventh century it was injured and desecrated by the Mohammedans. Finally in the twelfth century the Crusaders restored it; and although it has been repeatedly injured by hostile attacks and by accidental conflagrations, much of the original features is still preserved. Around it and opening into it the Catholics, the orthodox Greeks, the Armenians, and the Copts have chapels of their own; and of these that of the

OLD TREES ON THE TEMPLE PLATEAU.

Mosque of the Kaaba in Mecca itself. More than this, it is one of the most beautiful among religious edifices, not from its magnitude or from any peculiar genius in its construction, but from the extraordinary charm of its decoration within and without. It is in the shape of an octagon, with each side measuring sixty-six feet long. The outer walls are divided by

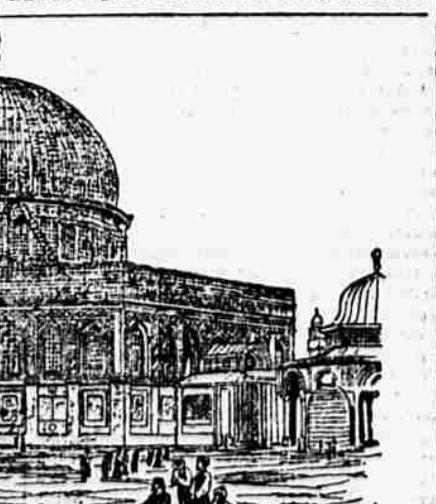
a moulding or cornice which separates them into a basement sixteen feet high covered with marble, and an upper story twenty feet high, covered entirely with Persian tiles of many colors, most delicate patterns, and splendid lustre, producing altogether an effect of surprising fascination. Nothing could be compared to it, except perhaps a gigantic kaleidoscope displaying an endless succession of gorgeous gems and dazzling brilliancy. When you stand near enough to distinguish the tints and the patterns of the tiles, you are absorbed in a delight such as you never felt elsewhere; and if you stand too far off to see so minutely, the effect is that of an infinitely soft and ever-varying rainbow.

Yet there is no uniformity in the patterns or colors of the tiles, though the whole of each mosque must have been decorated some eight or nine hundred years after the structure of the building had been completed. If indeed we may say that it is completed yet. In November we saw men at work putting up over the tiles which adorn the outer wall, a frieze of other tiles likewise Persian, each of them two feet or thereabouts in height, of an indigo blue lustre, and bearing raised upon them Arabic letters, also about two feet high, and so claim

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to all the people; for behold, there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

As we drive quietly along, the road passes almost within touching distance of "Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah," and we stop to gaze at the monument where the mother of Israel was laid to rest four thousand years ago. It is no longer in decay; having been repaired and made clean and seemly through the liberality of the late



THE MOSQUE OF OMAR.

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to all the people; for behold, there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

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